

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 WELLIN 04117 01 OF 02 120645Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /013 W
-----055320 122059Z /17

R 120549Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4005
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 04117

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EA ONLY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, WS, FJ
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO SUVA

1. AS YOU ARE AWARE, DURING MY TENURE AS AMBASSADOR HERE I HAVE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE I ATTACH TO HAVING A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN FIJI. IT WAS WITH PLEASURE, THEREFORE, THAT I GREETED THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE MADE DURING FISCAL 1978. THIS CAN ONLY EMPHASIZE TO THE ISLANDERS, PARTICULARLY THE FIJIANS, THE GROWING ATTENTION THAT THE U.S. IS NOW PAYING TO THE REGION. SUCH A MOVE SHOULD ALSO SERVE US WELL WITH OUR ANZUS PARTNERS.

2. THIS SAID, I WOULD, HOWEVER, HOPE THAT THE JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEW AMBASSADOR IN FIJI NOT BE DELINEATED IN A VACUUM BUT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTS OF LIFE AMONG THESE ISLAND NATIONS. SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD SERIOUSLY QUESTION THE WISDOM OF PLACING WESTERN SAMOA UNDER OUR EMBASSY IN FIJI.
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAMOA AND FIJI IS A COMPLEX AND DELICATE ONE, INVOLVING TRADITIONAL ETHNIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MELANESIAN (FIJI) AND POLYNESIAN (WESTERN SAMOA) PEOPLES AND CONTRASTING EMERGING MODERN POLITICAL CURRENTS IN THE REGION.

3. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION

THE FOLLOWING:

(A) WESTERN SAMOAN PRIME MINISTER TUPUOLA EFI HAS REPEATEDLY TOLD THENEW ZEALANDERS THAT HE DID NOT SEE HOW ANYONE STATIONED IN SUVA COULDSEE SAMOA IN UNBIASED EYES, HAVING AS THEY WOULD CONSTANT CONTACT WITH THE FIJIANS.

(B) THE FIJIANS ARE EXHIBITING INCREASING NATIONALISM WITHIN THE AREA WHILE THE SAMOANS ARE MORE REGIONALLY MINDED. FOR EXAMPLE, I AM TOLD THAT TENSION WAS CLEARLY IN THE AIR AT THE LAST PACIFIC FORUM MEETING BETWEEN FIJIANS AND WESTERN SAMOANS WITH MANY OF THE SMALLER ISLANDS ALSO EXPRESSING THEIR OWN ANXIETIES ABOUT PERCEIVED "FIJIAN DOMINANCE."

(C) THE BRITISH, WHOSE RESIDENT HIGH COMMISSIONER IN TONGA HAD BEEN ACCREDITED TO WESTERN SAMOA AS WELL, WERE ASKED EARLIER THIS YEAR TO ACCREDIT THEIR HIGH COMMISSIONER FROM WELLINGTON INSTEAD. THIS NOW HAS BEEN DONE. THE INCIDENT DEMONSTRATES THE SAMOAN RELUCTANCE TO HAVE THEIR RELATIONS OUTSIDE THE REGION BE CONDUCTED THROUGH ANOTHER PACIFIC ISLAND NATION, EVEN VIA A CLOSE POLYNESIAN SISTER-STATE SUCH AS TONGA.

(D) NO OTHER NATION TO MY KNOWLEDGE SOLELY COVERS SAMOA FROM FIJI. SINCE 1976, THE AUSTRALIANS TRIED TO GET

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AGREEMENT FROM APIA FOR THEIR HIGH COMMISSIONER TO BE ACCREDITED TO WESTERN SAMOA. THIS, HOWEVER, WAS NOT GIVEN, THE SAMOANS EMPHASIZING THAT THEY WISHED EITHER REPRESENTATION FROM WELLINGTON OR A RESIDENT HIGH COMMISSIONER IN APIA ITSELF. EVENTUALLY THE IMPASSE WAS BREACHED THROUGH HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS BY THE WESTERN SAMOAN PRIME MINISTER IN CANBERRA. THE AGREED ARRANGEMENT, WE UNDERSTAND, CALLS FOR AN AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN SAMOA HEADED BY AN ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER WITH THE AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SUVA FORMALLY ACCREDITED TO WESTERN SAMOA.

(E) THE SAMOANS HAVE ONLY TWO OVERSEAS MISSIONS, HERE AND IN NEW YORK. THEY HAVE NO REPRESENTATION IN SUVA, NOR DO THEY INTEND TO. WHEN THEY ESTABLISHED THEIR HIGH COMMISSION IN WELLINGTON, ONE OF THE BASIC REASONS WAS FOR CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH THE SAMOANS NOW HAVE REPRESENTATION IN NEW YORK, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS BY NO MEANS SIGNALS A DESIRE TO LESSEN CONTACTS IN WELLINGTON. THUS, DEALING WITH SAMOA FROM SUVA CAN ONLY BE FROM THE SAMOAN VIEW A

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 04117 02 OF 02 130811Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /013 W
-----071787 130812Z /12

R 120549Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4006
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 WELLINGTON 04117

STADIS////////////////////////////////

STEP BACKWARD IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

4. FOR ALL OF THESE REASONS, WHICH I BELIEVE WOULD BE
SHARED BY OUR ANZUS ALLIES AS WELL, I WOULD URGE THAT
WHEN PLANS FOR PLACING A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN SUVA ARE
IMPLEMENTED THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR WESTERN SAMOA BE LEFT
IN THE HANDS OF AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON. SUCH A COURSE WOULD
DO NOTHING TO IMPAIR THE MISSION OF SUVA, BUT RATHER
WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR RELATIONS
IN THE PACIFIC AS A WHOLE. SELDEN

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